

REMARKS

This Amendment is filed in response to the Office Action dated December 8, 2003. Applicant first notes with appreciation the Examiner's thorough examination of the application as evidenced by the Office Action. In response to the Office Action, Applicant has added additional claims to highlight additional patentable features of the invention. Further, Applicant has amended Claims 1, 7, and 13 to more clearly define the claimed invention. Applicant respectfully submits that the amended and added claims are patentable over the cited references. Applicant therefore requests that the Examiner reconsider the claims in light of the remarks below.

As currently presented, the patent application now includes Claims 1-26 with Claims 19-26 being newly added. Claims 1, 7, 13, 19, 23, and 25 are independent claims.

The Office Action rejects all of the claims of the application as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,826,257 to Snelling, Jr. Applicant respectfully disagrees with this rejection and provides the following remarks concerning patentability.

I. Background

The claimed invention provides a master data store. The master data store acts as a cross-reference to a plurality of electronic storage facilities. Specifically, each of the electronic storage facilities includes customer information that has an associated customer ID. Unfortunately, not all of the electronic storage facilities use the same customer ID for each customer. Therefore, one has to know the specific customer ID used for by each electronic storage facility in order to access information on a customer from various electronic storage facilities. In this regard, the master data store includes a unique identifier for each customer. Associated with each unique identifier is a list of the different electronic storage facilities that contain information about the customer and the customer ID used by each electronic storage facility to reference the information. By using the master data store, one can determine all electronic storage facilities that contain information about a customer and the customer ID needed to access the information.

An important feature of the claimed invention is that the master data store is populated and updated "on the fly" through interaction with the plurality of electronic storage facilities.

Specifically, when a new customer is added to one of the electronic storage facilities, the electronic storage facility sends the customer's information to the master data store. The system, method, and computer of the claimed invention check the customer information against the data in the master data store. If the customer is not already indexed in the master data store, a unique identifier is assigned to the customer and a data record is inserted in the master data store that includes the unique identifier, the electronic storage facility supplying the customer information, and the identification used by the electronic storage facility to identify the customer. If the customer is already uniquely identified in the master data store, the system, method, and computer of the present invention create a new record that includes the unique identifier, the electronic storage facility supplying the customer information, and the identification used by the electronic storage facility to identify the customer. In this way, the master data store is populated and updated by the plurality of electronic storage facilities connected thereto as new customer information is received by the electronic storage facilities.

The operation of the claimed invention may be better understood by the following example. Figure 2 of the application illustrates an example master data store for the network illustrated in Figure 1. As illustrated in Figure 2, there is a customer named Sandy L. Smith in the network. See **250**. She has been assigned a unique identity number of "3" in the master data store. As illustrated at **210**, she has information stored in electronic storage facility **120** under customer ID "ACZ20." She also has information stored in electronic storage facility **130** under customer ID "5." If later, Sandy L. Smith is added to electronic storage facility **110** with customer ID Sandra Smith, the following steps take place:

- 1) The system, method, and computer receive identifying information on the customer Sandy L. Smith from the electronic storage facility **110**;
- 2) The system, method, and computer determine whether an identifier exists in the master data store for the customer based on the received identifying information. The electronic storage facility typically sends information such as the customer's name, phone number, social security number, email address, etc., which are used by the system, method, and computer to determine if the customer matches an existing customer profile in the master data store.;
- 3) The system, method, and computer would determine that the new customer information relates to unique ID "3" in the master data store and assign the identifier "3" to the new information.; and

4) The system, method, and computer next cross-reference the assigned identifier with the received identifying information. In other words, the system, method, and computer create the following new record in the master data store as shown in the hi-lighted last row:

| CNDA ID | D.S. ID | Customer ID |
|------------|------------|-----------------|
| 3 | 120 | ACZ20 |
| 71 | 120 | CBK01 |
| 3 | 130 | 5 |
| 105 | 110 | John Doe |
| 159 | 130 | 10 |
| 235 | 110 | Jane Doe |
| 71 | 120 | RYT51 |
| 3 | 110 | Sandra Smith |

II. The Claims are Patentable

The '257 Snelling patent describes a system for linking information between databases. For example, as shown in Figure 6 of the patent, the system may include three separate databases, namely a customer database, an orders database, and an employees database. The customer database includes information about customers of the company, and the employee database includes information about each employee of the company. The customer database includes a customer ID associated with each customer's data, and the employees database includes an employee ID associated with each employee's data. Importantly, the orders database includes information about each order placed with the company. Associated with each order is a customer ID linking to the customer database identifying the customer placing the order and an employee ID linking to the employee database identifying the employee that made the sale. As such, the '257 Snelling patent does disclose providing an ID for a customer that identifies data associated with the customer stored in a database.

The '257 Snelling patent, however, fails to teach or suggest that there are a plurality of databases each containing information about a customer and each having a different unique ID associated with the data in each database. Further, the '257 Snelling patent fails to teach or

suggest a master data store including a list of all databases that contain data for the customer and the IDs used by each database to identify the customer's information stored in the databases. In particular, in the '257 Snelling patent, all of the information about the customer is stored only in the "customers" database. The data is then referenced by an ID in the other databases, such as the "orders" database. There is no other database containing information about the customer. There are no two databases containing information about the customer that use different IDs to identify the customer information. There is no master data store for cross-referencing the databases and the IDs they use for the customer. As there is nothing in the '257 Snelling patent disclosing data stored about a customer in different databases having different IDs for the data and no master data store that contains a list of the databases with the specific ID that the databases use for the customer's information, the '257 Snelling patent neither teaches or suggests the claimed invention. Applicant, therefore, submits that Claims 1-26 are patentable over the cited references.

Conclusion

In view of the amended and added claims and the remarks presented above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the present claims of the application are in condition for immediate allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued. The Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present application.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required

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therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



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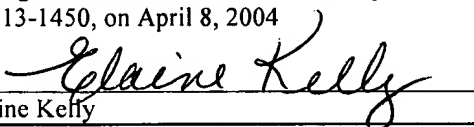
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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on April 8, 2004



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